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February, 1986

Vol. 6, No. 2

M.A.C.E. JOURNAL

"Devoted Exclusively To The Atari Computer User"



THE ATARI 520 ST A WONDER IN ITS OWN TIME!

Also in this issue:

- ST News and reviews
- New columns and a new Editor
- Computer art contest
- Lots of fun and excitement

Published by the Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiasts

A WORD FROM YOUR EDITOR

Hello and welcome to the M.A.C.E Journal. My name is Fred Kandah and I will be your editor for the next few issues.

By now you have noticed that the Journal is a little bit different than you are used to seeing. Let me explain a few of the technical aspects of the new Journal.

The cover is no longer a different weight of paper. The cover used to be printed on 70# paper, it is now 60#, the inside pages were printed at 50# and now they too are printed on 60# paper. This month's Journal is white. Fear not! The colored front and back covers will be back next month. I just thought a change to white would be neat for one month. This month's Journal as you will find out is devoted to the Atari 520 ST. Whether we like it or not the 520 ST is here to stay, so we

might as well make the best of it!

There are several new columns that appear this month. The first is called Devil's Advocate. This will be a discussion on new topics in an interesting way. This column will present both sides of an issue and let you decide the outcome. Also new this month is *Rumors*. *Rumors* is a forum for those nasty rumors that float around. We will do our best to present you with the most accurate and up to date rumors that can be had for the Atari user.

Finally before we go on to the rest of the magazine. I thank you for this position and hope to make the best of it. I hope to present new and exciting articles and programs. We all want to stay as up to date as possible and this is what the Journal is for. Please send in ideas and articles to Fred. My phone number is on the inside back cover. Don't hesitate to call if you have any questions. Thanks for your support and confidence.

Fred Kandah, Editor.

Rumors

Welcome to *Rumors*, a column that promises to be a very exciting.

In light of this month's topic, the 520 ST, we present some ST rumors. Rumor has it that at an unnamed computer show, a representative of the Atari corporation was seen demoing a new processor for the Atari 520 ST. It was a 68020 with co-processor. This fits right in to the spot for the 68000 and gave the ST some pretty impressive performance. (Look out you mini users!) The new processor also works with the new graphic chips that along with the processor upgrade are to be released in the beginning of February. The potential is Awesome.

Rumor also has it that Atari is planning a new computer for release in late 1986. The new machine is code named the TT. It is supposedly the answer to all those miniframe power users out there. It is said to run with a full 32/32 processor, have a full 1024 x 1024 resolution in 16 colors!! I don't know about you but this sounds really hot!

The last rumor on our list deals with another new computer. Depending on the continent that you are on it is called the ST Plus or the 1040 ST. Either way it is supposed to be a 520 ST type computer with 1 megabyte (In an Atari???) of on board ram and a built in disk drive. Look for this beauty real soon from what I have heard.

Well that wraps up this month's rumors. Hope to see you next month.

TO M.A.C.E MEMBERS

We the officers of M.A.C.E. are here to serve the club members and to help as much as we can. We hope that if you need questions answered you won't hesitate to call us. We only ask that you be courteous and not call at odd times or on holidays. Thanks.

SPECIAL THANKS!

Thank you to all of our advertisers and friends who so generously donated gifts and merchandise for our annual Chistmas Give-a-Way. Special thanks to O.S.S. and I.C.D. inc, for their generous contributions!

Thank you Mike Mitchell for putting it all together and for the truck load of gifts you gathered. Congratulations on a job WELL DONE!!! The party was a fine success and enjoyed by all.

Thank you Ken Naigus for the M.A.C.E Christmas disk. Ken put together a medley of Chistmas public domain software to create a disk dedicated to the season. Thanks for sharing your work.

Thank you Ann Ezzell. Ann was needed to get the journal out last month and she graciously volunteered. We appreciate your loyalty.

Thank you to all M.A.C.E. members for your support. Whether you are an active member or a silent observer, your support and membership are important. Stay

with us for a 1986 filled with Good friends, Good work and Good fun!

Submissions

Ok M.A.C.E. members, show us your talent. Have you purchased a new piece of software or hardware lately? Tell us about it! Write for the Journal and be published!! Call Fred Kandah for details today!

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**M.A.C.E.
MINUTES
General Meeting
December 17, 1985**

Place: Southfield Civic Center
Southfield, Mi.

Reported By: **B.J. Franczyk**
Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order by President Alva Thomas at 7:30 P.M.

There was a short discussion concerning the condition of the Nova Beam and the problems with doing the demos. The general consensus after a show of hands was to show the demos anyway.

We then heard from Burt Gregory, the treasurer, who addressed the problems with repairing or replacing our projector. Mike Landis, the Hardware Coordinator, agreed to do some shopping and look at the new Sony and Zenith projectors to see if either will fill our needs and fit our price range.

There was then a demo of THE GREAT AMERICAN ROAD RACE and STAR TREK.

The next order of business was the nominations for a M.A.C.E. Journal editor. Mike Lechkun resigned his position at the December 2nd officer's meeting. Nominations were open to the floor and Fred Kandah was the only one nominated. The nomination was seconded and Fred was declared Journal editor by a unanimous vote. Fred then spoke of his responsibilities and plans for the Journal while he is in this position.

The rest of the meeting was dedicated to the traditional Christmas giveaway. Mike Mitchell did a terrific job gathering donations from our generous advertisers. There was a steady stream of winners with a prize for just about everyone.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M. with wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year extended to all our members and their families.

Faithfully Reported by,

B.J. Franczyk

A Tour of Michtron

By
Fred Kandah

Atari 520 ST (ST) meet Michtron. Michtron has already met the ST, thats for sure. This is perhaps the most important introduction for both.

Michtron is a software development house located in Pontiac. Michtron presently has ten titles for the ST and has immediate plans for six more. I recently went on a tour of Michtron with Michtron's president Gordon Monnier. Most of Michtron's fifteen programmers work out of house. Which means that the programmers work in their own homes. Michtron is an experienced development house with titles for the Sanyo 550 the IBM PC and now of course the ST.

The Michtron operation is incredible. All printing and duplication is done in the production center which is adjacent to the main offices. Here Michtron handles all printing and duplication. Duplication is easy because none of Michtron's present titles are copy protected.

Michtron has taken a very benevolent attitude toward possession and use of its programs. It is clear that once you purchase a Michtron program it is yours. But Michtron fairly requests that you not pirate their software. Michtron offers excellent software at a very reasonable price. Michtron has been very fair and straight forward in their dealings with Atari owners, let's be fair to them, show our appreciation and not pirate their software.

Now on to more exciting things. Some of Michtron's titles include M-Disk by Tim Purves, a ram disk for the ST, Soft Spool a print spooler to free the ST up while printing (See this month's Antic), Michtron Utilities a very powerful set of utilities written by Tim Purves as well. M-Dupe is a very useful program that copies disks of both the protected and unprotected types.

Gold Runner, available Jan. 1986, is a Lode Runner type of game which takes advantage of the ST's graphic speed and capabilities. Calander is useful to keep track of appointments.

Communications packages available from Michtron include: Mi-Term a powerful multifunctional communication program which is capable of 9600 baud transmission. (A useful item in dealing with mainframes. Hint Hint). This programs also offers x-modem and Dft protocols for file transfers. Michtron also offers a full function BBS. Which this author hopes to have running in the metro Detroit area soon. This BBS offers 16 special interest areas, supports x-modem, Dft and ascii upload and download, bulletins, message bases and lots more. The board is written in C so it is fast! This board should be a very hot seller.

Flip side written by my friend Ken Olsen and his partner Phil Hollyer is a Gem version of the ever popular othello. This program takes full advantage of Gem and the ST.

As my tour of Michtron was winding down I recieved the most eagerly awaited treat. The one piece of software the tour guide saves for last and the one that the tourist wants to see the most. This program is a game called

Time Bandits. First a warning. IF YOU WANT A 520 ST BUT DON'T WANT TO SPEND THE MONEY. DON'T LOOK AT THIS PROGRAM! IT WILL CAUSE YOU TO PURCHASE THE ST.

It is an adventure with 2 video games, an action adventure and as many levels as your sanity can bear plus a few. This game is fantastic. The color and graphics will impress anyone. I will dare say that in my six years of microcomputers, this is perhaps the finest piece of software I have seen. We are going to try to get Mr. Monnier to demo the software at the January Meeting.

So I left Michtron with thoughts of Time Bandits running through my head. This new software really put the cap on my ideas about the Atari 520 ST. It is going to be a winner.

You may contact Michtron at 313-334-5700 for ordering and details or see one of the fine advertisers that we have in the Journal.

Fred Kandah



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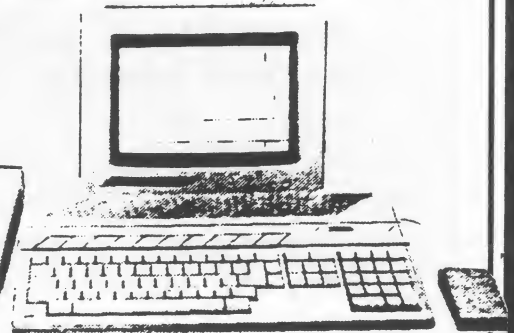
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DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

Welcome to Devil's Advocate. We hope that you enjoy this column and that you profit by our analysis. If you have any ideas for topics you would like to see covered. Send your suggestions to the Editor through the M.A.C.E. Po box, phone or one of the Areas BBSs.

This premiere topic of Devil's Advocate is appropriately a discussion of the question: "Do I need a 16 or 32 bit computer?" Well there are a wealth of reasons to go either route. What we will do here is to present a few and to help you on the road to a decision.

Let us consider the advantages of each. The Atari 8 bit computers, the 400, 800, 800 XL and the 130 XE (we won't consider the 1200 and 1400 mistakes) are a very popular computer and very well supported. They have both established hardware and software bases. There are peripherals ranging from CPM add ons to Letter Quality printers to communications equipment available. The hardware technology is older, but is still very useful and found at very

reasonable prices. My sources tell me that a 48 K 800 computer (if you can find one) with a Indus disk drive can be had for about 300 dollars. After you add a 100\$ 850 interface, you have a system that is ready to accept peripherals and is very useful and productive. A 200\$ option is a 192k Ram disk available from Axalon systems. Without the ram disk you have a useful computer for about 400\$ not including the monitor or TV.

Unfortunately the computers are only designed to access 48 K of memory (except the 130XE) but this is changing also. More memory for the 130XE is available as well as for the 800XL line. Software for the 8 bit computers is plentiful and very diverse. There is also a lot of very strong user group support for these computers.

The other side of the coin is the 16/32 bit Atari computers. The 520 ST comes with a standard 512 K of ram. This ram is expandable to 8 megabytes of memory (8 Million bytes of storage!!) The 520 ST comes with serial, parallel, midi, monitor and hard drive interfaces. Yes you heard correctly the 520 ST is

capable of using a hard drive. This system is complete with monitor for about 800-1000\$. Many places are discounting the hardware and software as well so the an ST system can be had for hundreds less.

The software for the ST is admittedly scare but is getting better. I personally own about 15 pieces of software and know of another 150 more titles. Software houses are reconsidering the Atari as a serious contender in the micro computer market and writing for it.

Support for the 520 ST is coming on strong. Many user groups are offering 520 Sigs or information. M.A.C.E. offers full support to 520 users and is considering a public domain library for the 520 ST.

The graphics and sound on the ST are fantastic. The ST's low res mode is the Atari 8 bit computer's high res mode. The ST offers up to 640 x 400 resolution. The sound is good as well. The machine has 3 independent voices, and accepts midi (electronic keyboard) input as well. Over all the ST series computers are

superior to the 8 bit computers.

There are disadvantages to both systems. When I first purchased my 800, it came with 16k and a power pack for 1200\$. I purchased 32k to go inside for 300\$ more and a disk drive for 499\$. Later I added more drives a printer; interface and modem. Alas all that is left is my faithful 800 and my original disk drive. All the rest went for hundreds less than originally cost. The ST system costs more than the 8 bit systems but I contend that its memory and capabilities are worth at least as much as it is sold for if not much more. Software will appear in quantity for the 520 ST and it will be a successful system. It seems as though when we are through arguing whether a system will survive or not it has become obsolete. Finally on an 8 bit note, unfortunately development for the 8 bit computers has seemed to slow down quite a bit.

As I said earlier, don't worry the 8 bit line will still be supported. I only contend that the new ST is to the 8 bit as was the 800 to the rest of the industry. A very successful inovator.

Whether an Atari 520 ST is for you or not is a good question. If you have a computer and want something new. This is definately a system to look into. If you don't have a comuter and are looking to buy one. Check the options out and compare. I am very confident that the ST will come out on top. All of you 8 bit users out there who don't want to buy a ST for whatever reasons had better stay away from it or it might dazzle you and change your mind. See you next month.

Well that is it for this month's Devil's advocate. I hope that the article is of some use and information. I hope that in the coming months the topics covered here will be what you want to see, so get on the phone, hop on a horse, write a letter and tell us what you want to see. (I'm not a mind reader!) Hope to see you next month. That is if the Editor does'nt cut my column.

**ST-STOP BBS
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Home Comuter Magazine

A review

By Gordon Totty

Let's read a magazine together. But not A n t i c, A.N.A.L.O.G., Compute!, or even the Atari Explorer. (By the way does anybody have an issue of the "Explorer that is later than summer 1985? I wrote to Atari to find out if I have missed something, but no answer yet.) And we'll skip all the other magazines except for Home Computer Magazine, specifically Vol.5 No. 6.

HCM is published 10 times a year and costs #3.50 on the newstand. I find it at B. Dalton Bookseller. By subscription it costs \$25.00 per year and for a one year subscription you can also get two issues on disk. For any issue, you can order the disk with all the programs in that issue for your computer for \$4.95, plus one dollar for shipping and handling. Add it all up and it comes to close to the cost of any other magazine with disk at newstand prices.

Effective with Vol 5 no. 5, HCM began to cover the Atari line. The magazine also covers Apple, Commodore, IBM and Texas Instruments. As with other magazines that cover multiple computers, you will turn a lot of pages that are of no or very little interest to you. But I bought the last two issues to see what HCM has to offer the Atari enthusiast.

HCM looks pretty good to me, especially for the beginning programmer. Here's what you get.

One hundred and forty six pages in the latest issue. Not bad for a magazine that includes no "outside" advertising. HCM does include some advertising, but not much. The latest issue includes a 16 page "Cornucopia Catalog" and an ad for another magazine called "Music and Electronics." Both of these ads feature the same mailing address as HCM, hence the claim "No outside advertising." Personally, I wish HCM did include advertising as I learn from the ads as well as from the copy.

Soft, "pulp" paper. This minor

defect is made up for with good use of color (you can't own an Atari and not appreciate color), clear print, and excellent organization of the material.

In addition to the usual stuff found in the front of magazines, such as "Inside HCM" explaining the current issue, an editorial, and table of contents, the latest issue has five full pages of letters to the editor, a feature I enjoy in every magazine, covered in more detail in HCM.

Next comes "Software Instructions" where they explain each of the type-in listings in general terms. For the Atari, this issue includes a mail merging program, a two-player economics simulation game, a computer simulation of a living cell, and a program that teaches you how to use assemblers.

Turning more pages brings us to the "Product Reviews" section. The latest issue covers Financial Cookbook and The Halley Project for the Atari. Not much, compared to other magazines, but these are longer reviews than you usually find in other magazines. If you do buy HCM, you will notice by this point

in the magazine that there is generous coverage of the TI-99/4A. I think this magazine used to be devoted exclusively to the 99-er.

We come to eighteen pages of "Tutorials." This is neat stuff! The latest issue has an Atari listing formatter and a frequency blender to add waveforms. Other tutorial add 18 commands to C-64 basic, provide an alarm clock for the C-64, 3-dimensional graphic surface on the Apple, play with sound on the TI, etc. I mention the "off-brand" stuff to let you see the diversity in the magazine. The layout of this material is first class, with good illustrations and clear listings.

A new tutorial feature is called "Problems in Productivity." Each issue a problem will be presented which is to be solved with productivity tools, e.g. a spreadsheet program. Next issue will print the HCM solution and a new problem.

Another regular feature is "HCM One-Liners," a page of one line programs. This issue's Atari one-liner turns the characters on the display upside down. I thought

I thought I did that once with one Poke, but am too lazy to find it again.

Now we have arrived at two pages of computer industry news, printed in the format of The Wall St. Journal. (Big brother to the M.A.C.E Journal? ed.) Here, in the current issue, we learn that IBM still has 300,000 PCjr's in inventory! How they can still sell them with the 520 ST around is a surprise to me. The laser disk encyclopedia from Grolier will sell for \$199 for the IBM PC and the Atari 520 ST (my, what company we are keeping). Commodore is in financial trouble. Atari has uncertain cash reserves. Two top executives have left Atari. Might Apple sue Atari over the GEM? Don't worry about it, according to Sam Tramiel.

Next we see 22 mini-reviews on four pages called "Home Computer Product News." Let's skip it.

The last half of the magazine is devoted to the program listings. Like Compute!, HCM provides a guide to typing in programs and an error detection program. But unlike any other magazine I have ever seen, HCM provides for each

program and computer a "Programmer's Window." This feature, one page for each program, includes a flow chart, an explanation, a variables list including functions and a list of the line number blocks with a brief description of purpose. This is very helpful to a beginner like myself

Last comes the actual program listings. HCM uses a unique approach here. Numbers are in boldface. A double vertical bar separates the line numbers from the statements. A vertical background grid facilitates the entry of spaces. I haven't used this enough to decide if I like it better or not, but it certainly is different.

Well, now you have "seen an issue of HCM. Did you like it? Let me give you my reactions.

At \$3.50 a copy off the newstand, it seems too high. I wish that it included enough advertising to help drop the per copy price. It always seems to me that, after buying three or four of these magazines, I might have been better off buying a book. (Compute! drives this point home

nicely with all the books they publish). But HCM is only fifty cents over the magazines that do include advertising, so maybe it is not too much out of line if you are going to buy magazines. And, of course, you can drive down the unit cost with a subscription.

Like other multi-computer magazines, I finish each issue wishing there had been more coverage of my brand. In this group, however, I like HCM better than Compute!, although HCM doesn't even try to compete in the program listing category and is aimed at very young or very inexperienced users. Softside and I have been apart for a long time; I remember it as more game oriented than HCM. If you have been disappointed with your multi-computer magazine you might want to try HCM.

Finally I think both Antic and A.N.A.L.O.G. could benefit by picking up an idea or two from the style and layout of HCM. Though my sample is very limited at present, I have been impressed with the type-in programs and the tutorials in HCM. The programs seem more imaginative than the arcade games others try.

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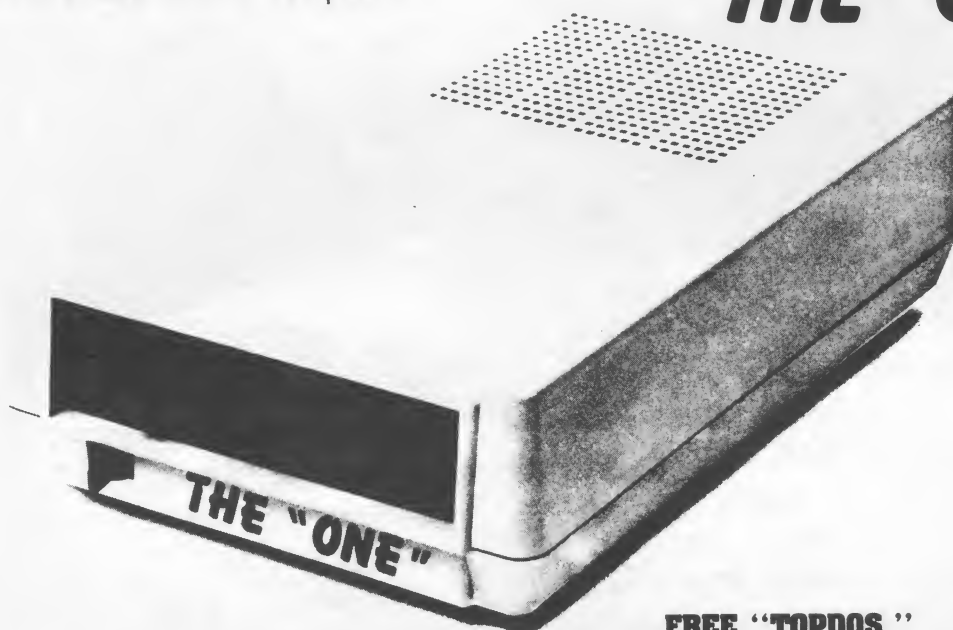
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DEGAS

BY BATTERIES INCLUDED

DEGAS is the first commercially available drawing program for the ST computer. It functions in all three modes of the ST. Low, medium and high resolution. With 16, 4 and 2 colors respectively.

This review is going to be rather short. I hope to go in to the finer details of DEGAS in a later issue. What I will do here is to whet your appetite and to show you a collection of drawings that were done with DEGAS.

When you boot DEGAS, it assumes that you want to work in the resolution that you had the desktop set to. It boots to a menu page. To switch from menu page to drawing page, one uses the right mouse button. (I knew it was there for some reason!) There are a number of options available in DEGAS. The program allows you to control mirror images, shadows, and much more.

The colors in DEGAS can be changed to what ever collection of the above stated number you want.

There are a number of drawing options, from slow draw to brush sizes.

I hate to make these kinds of comparisons, but Degas makes the Atari function like a Macintosh but with better resolution and color.

The moment I began to use DEGAS, I fell in love with its ease of use and clarity. You can pick up the program and make use of most of its capabilities without even reading the manual.

This is a highly recommended graphic package for the Atari. In later issues I hope to describe the full potential of DEGAS and to initiate an art contentst on both the 8 bit and 16 bit computers. The details of this are found later in this issue.

I hope to provoke more intrest in computer art and its uses in society. I will attempt to present some practicle uses for computer art. Look for my articles next month.

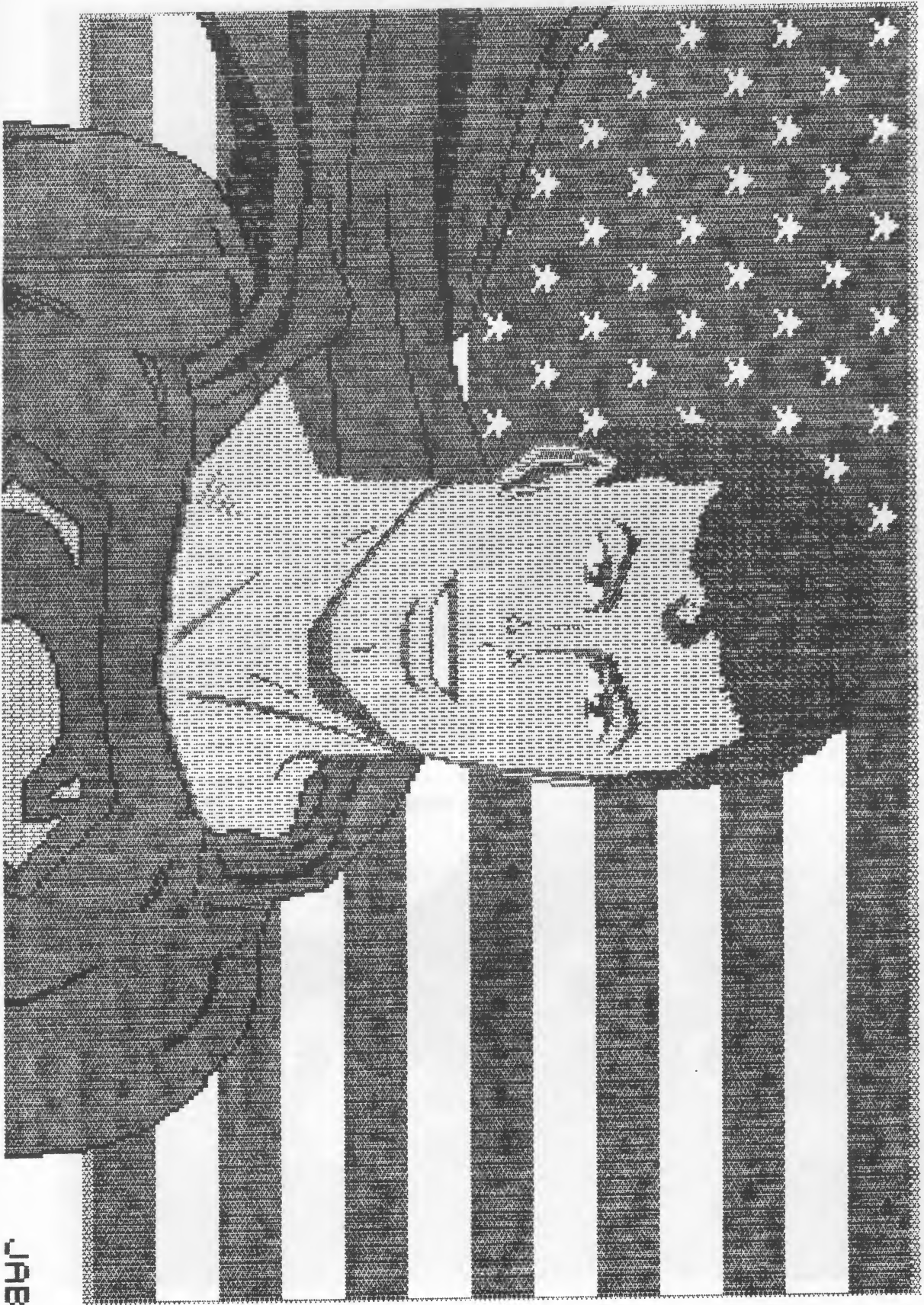
Howard Goldman

A HISTORY OF DREAMS

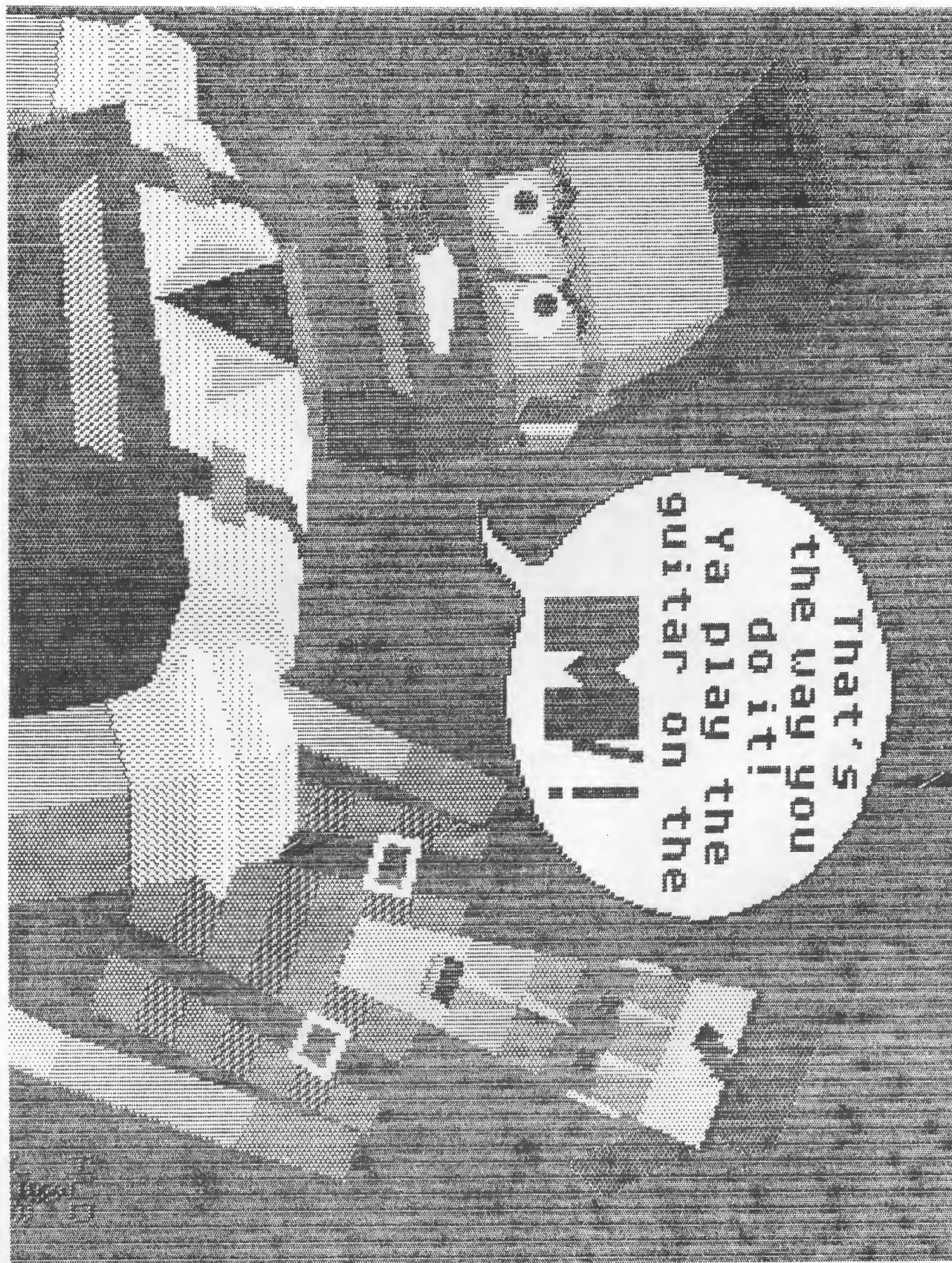
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JAB



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ST-Stop BBS

The new BBS on the Block

This is an article on the topic of bulletin boards systems. Not just any systems, but rather the systems that I (Fred Kandah) have set up.

My first attempt at a BBS was with the help of Chet Gonterman, the past M.A.C.E. librarian. With his hardware and my know how, we ran a BBS in Farmington Hills, some of you might remember it. It was a fairly free board with no restrictions on the messages and ideas. Downloads were always fresh and plentiful. (Thanks Indus!) Ah the days of my youth.

Well we come to the topic at hand, the ST-Stop BBS. This is the newest BBS in the metro area, it goes up on line Monday 1-13-85. It is the first ST BBS in the state. This is truly an exciting thing. The ST-Stop is promising to be a marvel in its own time, just as the ST is.

The board will initially run with 512k of ram and 2 disk drives, each of which hold about 380 K.

The board will run at 300/1200 baud rates and will be up 24 hours a day.

In a short while the system will boast a 20 meg hard drive and 1 megabyte of ram. The board will reside in ram disk thus making response lightning fast.

The software that will run the BBS is from Michtron.(Look for a review later this year) It is written in C and is very fast. It has a large number of options and is a very powerful program.

Later in 1986 look for the ST-Stop BBS to run original software. Thats right my friends, Fred is going to write more BBS software.(For those of you who remember my 800 BBS) That will allow personalized messages and its size will hover around 300-400 k. The board may utilize graphics so as to personalize it to the Atari community. The board may at some time support the Mac. (There is still a place in my heart.) Give us a call. You won't be disappointed.

Fred Kandah

ST-Stop 665-7286 24 hours.

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Leave a message on one of the M.A.C.E. boards or call Fred Kandah at 665-8982, 668-4966 or the ST-Stop BBS at 665-7286.

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DAYS ONLY ASK FOR Jim Kanaka

NEXTMONTH

Next months Journal will have the new set of columns introduced this month as well as a new column entitled Sysop's Corner, where the guest author will be one of the area's BBS sysops writing on a communications related subject. We will also review more of the Michtron 520 ST line as well as several products for the 8 bit machines.

Also next month, look for type in programs for both the 8 bit and the 16 bit lines. We are looking for good authors out there to assure the quality of the material in the Journal.

We hope to start the MACE challenge. This is to be a column where a puzzle or problem is presented along with the previous month's solution. Mace member who solve the problem correctly will be rewarded with a prize. Look for more good articles in the coming months.

Thank You.

Fred Kandah, Editor.

COMUTER ART

Welcome to computer art. This is a monthly forum for our art and its uses. This month along with the DEGAS article found elsewhere in this issue, are found four examples of computer art by users.

There are many types of comuter art forms. They range from the multimillion dollar holographic projection computers to the very simple Micro computer art form. Many people make use of the comuters ability to create pictures and designs. This month's journal is the work of such a computer.

The computer that does the layout of the Journal, handles much of the typeset and printing of the pages. This machine is also capable of creating very intricate and detailed drawings. The amazing thing is that this computer has less resoution than the Atari 520 ST.

The key to this layout computer is the fact that it interfaces to a Laser printer. The Atari 520 ST

layout program and laser printer interfaces should be out relatively soon. This will allow anyone to produce the Journal or similar quality publications. (Oh well there goes Fred's job!)

Eventually the cost of laser printers will come down to the range of the average user. It is my hope to own a laser printer within a years time. This will allow me to have excellent print any time I desire. The laser printers print a page in aproximately 10 seconds. This is not a bad average time for a page.

The laser printer functions on a copy machine type basis. The laser printer uses the same type of toner, or dry ink that the copy machines use. A laser, according to instruction, causes the ink to become excited and thus to mark the paper. It is a very neat idea.

I want everyone to enter the art contest. There is an entry form and rules in this issue somewhere. Please show us your work, we would love to see it.

Until next month,

Howard Goldman

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ART CONTEST

These are the details of the M.A.C.E. art contest. The rules are quite simple. The art work must be done on an Atari computer. The printing may be done on either a laser printer or a dot matrix printer. We would prefer a dot matrix printer in black and white for compatibility purposes.

To enter your work, each month there will be this page along with rules each month. The next month the winners will be published along with their art in the Journal, there will

prizes given to the winners in each of the yet to be chosen categories. So provide the information necessary below and mail it to:

M.A.C.E. ART
PO BOX 2785
Southfield, MI 48037

Your Name
Address
City, State Zip code
Telephone Number

Type of computer.

Type of montior or TV.

Program used and resolution
mode if applicable.

Title of work.

Type of printer used.

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